

## A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

# Family Status Changes — Employees

All Funds

A family status change is a personal event that can have an impact on many aspects of your employee benefits (pension, life insurance, health insurance, etc.). Use this fact sheet as a guide to updating information pertaining to your pension and benefits for the following family status changes:

- Marriage or domestic partnership;
- Addition of a newborn child, adopted child, stepchild, foster child, or legal ward to your family;
- Divorce or legal separation; or
- Death of a family member.

## UPDATING PERSONAL INFORMATION

### Notifying Your Employer

In the event of a family status change you should immediately update your personnel records with your human resources representative or benefits administrator. This is also a good time to confirm your address and phone number with your employer. In addition to updating these records, your human resources representative or benefits administrator can provide you with any necessary applications for changing your pension and group life insurance beneficiary, and/or health benefits coverage.

### Name Change

To change your name on your pension account, write a cover letter stating your former name, new name, and Social Security number. Send the letter along with a **photocopy** of your certified marriage certificate or other legal documentation showing the name change to: Optical Disk, Division of Pensions and Benefits, PO Box 295, Trenton, NJ 08625-0295.

### Address Change

Notify your employer of any change to your address. If you are a member of the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP) your health plan will also need your new address. Call the Office of Client

Services at (609) 777-4355 to report your address change or write to the State Health Benefits Program at PO Box 299, Trenton, NJ 08625-0299.

Since other sections of the Division of Pensions and Benefits do not keep address records of members who have not yet retired, there is normally no need for employees to inform the Division of an address change for other than health benefits purposes. However, if you have recently applied for retirement or another benefit and have not yet received it, you should write to the section of the Division that is processing your benefit to advise them that your address has changed since you filed your application.

## PENSION AND GROUP LIFE INSURANCE BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION

You may update your beneficiary information for pension and/or group life insurance at any time. To do this, you must complete a *Designation of Beneficiary* form and return the form to the Division of Pensions and Benefits. The change is effective when the Division receives your properly completed form. After approximately six weeks, a confirmation letter acknowledging the insurance beneficiary change will be sent to you. When filling out your *Designation of Beneficiary* form:

- Thoroughly read the instructions on the first and second page.
- Carefully complete the form, making sure to indicate your beneficiary's full name (e.g. Mary Jones, not Ms. M. Jones). *Designation of Beneficiary* forms containing erasures, cross outs, or correction fluid will not be processed and a new form will be returned to you.

You can obtain a *Designation of Beneficiary* form from your human resources representative or benefits administrator or by contacting the Division's Office of Client Services at (609) 292-7524. The *Designation of Beneficiary* form is also available on our Web site at: [www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/pubslist.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/pubslist.htm)

**Alternate Benefit Program (ABP) Members:** You should complete a *Designation of Beneficiary* form to update your life insurance beneficiary. To change the beneficiary on your retirement investment, contact your chosen investment carrier(s). Your campus human resource office can provide information about contacting your investment carrier(s).

**Deferred Compensation Plan or Supplemental Annuity Collective Trust (SACT) Members:** Changing your pension and insurance beneficiary will not automatically change your Deferred Compensation Plan or SACT beneficiary. If you are a member of the Deferred Compensation Plan and/or SACT and wish to change your beneficiary, a separate Deferred Compensation or SACT *Beneficiary Designation* form must be completed. To obtain a form, contact the Deferred Compensation Plan at (609) 292-3605 or SACT at (609) 633-2031.

### FAMILY STATUS CHANGES FOR STATE HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM MEMBERS

When a family status change occurs, you are responsible for notifying your employer to update your health benefit coverage information. You should see your human resources representative or benefits administrator to obtain a *State Health Benefits Program Application*. **You must return your completed application to your human resources representative or benefits administrator for processing.**

If you are a member of the **SHBP Employee Prescription Drug Plan**, you may also update your information for prescription coverage on the same *State Health Benefits Program Application* used for your medical plan coverage.

If you are a State employee enrolled in the **State Employee Group Dental Program**, your human resources representative or benefits administrator will provide a separate *New Jersey State Dental Benefits Application*.

### When SHBP Eligibility Begins

If you wish to add a dependent to your medical, prescription, or dental coverage as a result of a change in family status, you must submit the application(s) through your employer within 60 days of the event (marriage, birth, adoption, etc.). For your

**spouse, domestic partner, newborn child, adopted child, stepchild, foster child, or legal ward**, coverage begins as follows:

- If you are a State biweekly employee (paid through the State's Centralized Payroll), your dependent's coverage will be retroactive to the first day of the pay period in which the event occurred.
- If you are a local government, local education, or State monthly employee, your dependent's coverage begins retroactive to the date of the event.

For an **adopted child, stepchild, foster child, or legal ward** to be considered eligible, the child must live with you and be substantially dependent upon you for support. An *Affidavit of Dependency* and legal documentation must also be submitted along with your health benefits application. The affidavit can be obtained by contacting the Office of Client Services at (609) 292-7524.

If you do not add your additional dependent(s) within 60 days of your family status change, you will be permitted to add the dependent(s) only during the annual SHBP Open Enrollment period. (If your dependent is covered under another employer provided health plan and is subsequently dropped from that health plan, you may enroll the dependent under your SHBP coverage within 60 days of the loss of this coverage. Proof of prior coverage is required.)

### When SHBP Coverage Ends

To *remove* a dependent from your health coverage as a result of a change in family status, such as the **death of a dependent family member, divorce or legal separation**, or if **your child marries or no longer lives at home** (other than dependents away at college), you must submit a *State Health Benefits Program Application* through your employer to delete the dependent. The dependent's coverage will be terminated upon the timely receipt of the application by the SHBP.

**Overage Dependent Children:** SHBP coverage for dependent children also ends on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in which they reach the age of 23\*. An overage dependent will be automatically deleted from your coverage. However, if the overage child

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is also the last child you are covering as a dependent, you should complete a *State Health Benefits Program Application* to change your level of coverage (from Family coverage to Member and Spouse/Domestic Partner or from Member and Child coverage to Single).

In addition, if the overage dependent wishes to apply for continued coverage under federal COBRA law, you must notify your human resources representative or benefits administrator to ensure receipt of a COBRA notice and application.

**Continued Coverage Under COBRA**

If your dependent is no longer eligible for health benefits coverage due to divorce, legal separation, or ineligibility, your former dependent is entitled to continue participation in the SHBP under the provisions of COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985). Your former dependent may purchase COBRA coverage to continue his or her health benefits for periods up to 36 months.

**For more detailed information about your health coverage, including COBRA, see the *SHBP Summary Program Description*.** To obtain a copy, see your human resources representative or benefits administrator, contact the Office of Client Services at (609) 292-7524, or view the *Summary Program Description* over the Internet at: [www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/shbp.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/shbp.htm)

**DIVORCE AND QUALIFIED DOMESTIC  
RELATION ORDERS (QDROs)**


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*\*An overage child may be eligible for continued dependent coverage if disabled. See the SHBP Summary Program Description for more information.*

In cases of **divorce**, you, your former spouse/domestic partner, and your respective attorneys or other authorized legal representatives have the right to obtain information about your benefits and how they are determined. Requests for additional information on QDROs and how they relate specifically to your employee benefits may be submitted in writing to the Legislative/Legal Affairs Unit, Division of Pensions and Benefits, PO Box 295, Trenton, NJ 08625-0295. Fact Sheet #42, *Divorce and Retirement Credits*, can be obtained by contacting the Office of Client Services at (609) 292-7524, or view the fact sheet over the Internet at: [www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/fact42.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/fact42.htm)

For **Deferred Compensation Plan members**, Fact Sheet #9, *Divorce and Your Deferred Compensation Account*, is available. To obtain this fact sheet you may contact the NJ State Employees Deferred Compensation Plan at (609) 292-3605, or view the fact sheet over the Internet at: [www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/fact09.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pensions/fact09.htm)

**When making significant changes to your pension and benefits, it is important to know your options and closely review the decisions you have made. Applications and forms may be submitted separately. Processing times will vary.**

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This fact sheet has been produced and distributed by:

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This fact sheet is a summary and not intended to provide total information.

Although every attempt at accuracy is made, it cannot be guaranteed.

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